

1504 b. 27

THE
MOST IMPORTANT.
TRUTHS and DUTIES
OF
CHRISTIANITY
S T A T E D;

Designed for those in the lower Stations of Life :
Particularly for the Instruction of such, as cannot read.

K
By the Rev. JAMES STONHOUSE, M. D.
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*It is recommended to serious Christians to read this to their
Relations, Friends, and Servants, who cannot read ;
or to use their Endeavours to have it read to them by
others.*

The EIGHTH EDITION.

L O N D O N.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS little Tract may be of general Use, but was drawn up principally for the Benefit of such, as cannot read; who are really great Objects of Compassion; and it may therefore be reasonably expected, that their Relations, and others, who can read, should supply this Defect in their Education by reading it to them in small Portions, and at proper Seasons, (especially on the Sabbath) that they may not be ignorant of those Things, which it highly concerns them to know; and it is to be hoped, that it will by the Grace of God be so deeply impressed on their Hearts, as to produce “the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness;” that they may glorify God by their Christian Profession, and Practice! And, that these important Purposes may be answered, they are exhorted to pray for the divine Blessing on what is here earnestly recommended to their constant Attention.

BRISTOL, April 15, 1778.

N. B. There will be no occasion to take any Notice to such as cannot read, of the Texts, which are put as Notes at the Bottom, till they are thoroughly acquainted with the Assertions, which such Texts are intended to prove: And then these may be read to them, as Confirmations from Scripture of what they are required to believe, and practise.

THE
PLAN OF SALVATION,
As contained in the
GOSPEL COVENANT.

The Design of it.

1. **T**O exalt the SAVIOUR,
 2. To humble the Sinner,
 3. To promote Holiness.
- See 1 John iv. 10. — Luke xvii. 10. — Heb. xli. 14.

The Blessings promis'd.

1. Pardon of Sin,
2. Assistance of the Spirit,
3. Eternal Glory.

The Terms requir'd.

1. Repentance,
 2. Faith,
 3. Renew'd Obedience.
- See Luke xiii. 3. — Heb. xi. 6. — Heb. v. 9.

The true Nature of Repentance.

- It is a real and total *Change* of Heart, and Life; and consists in
1. Sorrow for Sin,
 2. Confessing it,
 3. Forsaking it,
 4. Perseverance in Well-doing.
- See Matt. x. 22. — Rev. ii. 10.

The principal Means of Grace.

1. Secret and Family Prayer,
 2. Self Examination,
 3. Reading the Scriptures,
 4. Meditation,
 5. Public Worship, and receiving the Sacrament,
 6. Religious Conversation *.
- See Prov. xv. 7. — Malach. iii. 16. — 1 Thess. v. 11.

On the *regular* and *constant* Use of these *Means of Grace* according to the Gospel Covenant is *founded* the Hope of Glory.

The *Body* (given us by God) is to be *preserv'd* by the due Use of wholesome Food.

The *Soul* (redeem'd by Christ) is to be *nourish'd* by the due Use of the *Means of Grace*, which are the proper Food of Souls.

Without the continual Use of *suicable* Food both must perish.

* See Dr. Lucas's very useful little Tract on the *Influence* of religious Conversation with the *Regulation* of it.

T H E

Most important TRUTHS, &c.,

DOCTRINES, or TRUTHS to be believed.

1. **Y**OU are to *believe*, that there is a God infinitely great and glorious; (a)—that he is a *Spirit*, who fills Heaven and Earth; (b)—that he created you; (c)—that he preserves you; (d)—that he provides for you daily; (e)—that he sees *you* every where, tho' you cannot see *Him*; (f)—that he remembers all

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1. (a) The Heavens declare the *Glor*y of God: And the Firmament sheweth his handy Work. Ps. xix. 1. Thou, *even* thou art Lord *alone*, thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens with all their Host, the Earth, and all *Things*, that *are* therein, the Seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou *preservest* them all, and the Host of Heaven worshippeth thee. Nehem. ix. 6.—(b) God is a *Spirit*. John iv. 24. Can any hide himself in secret Places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord: Do not I fill Heaven and Earth? saith the Lord. Jer. xxiii. 24.—(c) The Lord God formed Man of the Dust of the Ground, and breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life; and Man became a living Soul. Gen. ii. 7.—(d) Thou *preservest* Man and Beast. Ps. xxxvi. 6.—(e) Give us this Day our daily Bread. Mat. vi. 11.—(f) Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee
B from

all your Behaviour; (g)—and that he is holy and just as well as good. (b)

2. You are to *believe* in Jesus Christ; (i)—that he is the Son of God; (k)—that by a *Generation* which none can declare, He is the *only-begotten* Son of God: “*Who shall declare his Generation?*” Isai. liii. 8; and that by an *Union*, which can neither be explained, nor conceived, He is one with the Father, “*the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person.*” Heb. i. 3.—that He came down from Heaven; (l)—that He was made in the Likeness of Man; (m)—that He was a Teacher sent from God; (n)—that He lived a Life of perfect Holiness; (o)—that He suffered Death on the Cross, that he might

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from thy Presence? Pf. cxxxix. 7. God dwelleth in the Light, which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man *hath* seen, nor *can* see. 1 Tim. iv. 16.—(g) A Book of *Remembrance* was written before the Lord for them, that *feared* Him, and thought upon his Name. Mal. iii. 16.—(b) *Just*, and *true* are thy Ways, thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and *glorify* thy Name? For thou only art *holy*, Rev. xv. 3, 4. The Lord is *good*. Pf. c. 5.

2. (i) This is his Commandment, that we should *believe* on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John iii. 23.—(k) Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the *Son* of the living God. Mat. xvi. 16.—(l) I came down from Heaven, not to do my *own* Will, but the Will of *Him*, who sent me, John vi. 31.—(m) See Phil. ii. 17.—(n) Thou art a Teacher come from God. John iii. 2.—(o) He did no Sin, neither was Guile found

might make an *Atonement* for Sin, and *reconcile* Sinners to God; (*p*)—that now Christ lives in Heaven, pleading for *Mercy* for all *penitent* Sinners; (*q*)—that all your *Hope* of Salvation must be placed in *Him* (*r*)—and that He is the *Author* of it to *all*, who *obey* Him. (*s*)

3. You are to *believe* in the Holy Spirit; (*t*)—You are not to grieve Him by any Sin; (*u*)—You are to believe, that you may be made holy and fit for Heaven by *his* Influences on your Heart, if you sincerely seek them; (*w*)—that you may not be deceived, consider

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found in his Mouth. 1 Pet. ii. 22.—(*p*) We were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, Rom. v. 10. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity. Titus ii. 14.—(*q*) Seeing that we have a great High Priest, who is passed *into the Heavens*, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our Profession: for we have not an High-Priest, who cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities. Heb. iv. 14, 15. He is able also to save them to the uttermost, who come to God by *Him*, seeing He *ever liveth* to make Intercession for them. Heb. vii. 29.—(*r*) In Hope of eternal Life, which God who cannot lie, has promised. Titus i. 2.—(*s*) He became the Author of eternal Salvation, unto all them that *obey* Him. Heb. v. 9.

3. (*t*) I will pray the Father, and he will give you *another Comforter*, that He may abide with you for ever: Even the *Spirit of Truth*. John xix. 16, 17. Your heavenly Father shall give the *holy Spirit* to them that ask it. Luke xi. 13.—(*u*) Grieve not the holy Spirit of God. Ephes. iv. 30.—(*w*) Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord

consider well the *Fruits of the Spirit*, which are *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance*. Gal. v. 22, 23. See Ephes. v. 9.

4. You are to *believe*, that you are an *immortal* Creature, and must be happy or miserable *for ever*; (x)—that you are a *sinful* Creature, exposed to the righteous Judgment of God for your Sins; (y) that you must repent, be converted, and become sincerely holy, or you will die in your Sins. (z)

5. You are to *believe*, that God will accept all sincere Penitents; (a)—will *love* you, if you *obey* him; (b)—and that he will

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Jesus, and by the *Spirit of our God*. 1 Cor. vi. 11. As many as are led by the *Spirit of God*, are the Sons of God. Rom. viii. 14.

4. (x) Then shall the *Dust* return to the Earth, as it was, and the *Spirit* shall return unto God, who gave it. Eccles. xii. 7. Know thou, that God will bring thee into Judgment. Eccles. xi. 9.—(y) Every Mouth shall be stopped, and all the World become *guilty* before God. Rom. iii. 19.—(z) Repent ye, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, when the Times of Refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord. Acts iii. 19. Follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord. Heb. xii. 14.

5. (a) Christ came not to call the righteous, but Sinners to *Repentance*. Luke v. 32.—(b) I love *them*, (saith God) that love *me*. Prov. viii. 17. If a Man love me, he will keep my *Commandments*, and my

will be *angry* with you, if you disobey Him. (c)

6. You are to *believe* that there is *another* State and World after *this*—that the *Soul* does not die with the Body ; (d)—that God will raise the Body at last ; (e)—that there is a Day of Judgment ; (f)—that the *good* shall go into *Heaven*, a Place of Happiness, and the *wicked* shall go into *Hell*, a Place of Misery ; (g)—that your Body and Soul will be joined together *at that Day*, and dwell *for ever* in one or other of these States, according to your Behaviour in *this* Life.

PRECEPTS, or Things to be practised.

1. *Duties to God.*—You are to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. (h)—You are *daily*

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Father will love him, and *we* will come unto Him. John xiv. 23. Obey my Voice, and do according to all, which I command you : So shall ye be *my People* : and I will be *your God*. Jer. xi. 4.—(c) God is *angry*, with the wicked every Day. Ps. vii. 11.

6. (d) “ But, they are not able to kill the *Soul*.” Mat. x. 28.—(e) The Trumpet shall sound, and the Dead shall be raised. 1 Cor. xv. 52.—(f) We must all appear before the *Judgment Seat* of Christ, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that He hath done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. v. 10—(g) The wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment ; but the righteous into Life eternal. Mat. xx. 46.

1. (h) God is a Spirit ; and they that worship Him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth. John iv. 24.

daily to pray to Him in secret for what you want. (i)—[See a *short* Form of Prayer at the End of this little Tract.]—You are to *praise* God, and give Him *Thanks* for his *Mercies*; (k) such as your Health, Food, Raiment and Friends, especially the Bible, and divine Ordinances.—You are to love Him; (l)—to fear Him; (m)—to obey Him; —(n) to trust in Him; (o)—to be patient, and submissive to his Will. (p)

2. *Duties to Christ*.—You are to exercise *Faith* in Him, (q) as the Saviour of the World
the

T E X T S.

—(i) When thou prayest enter into thy Closet; and, when thou hast shut the Door, pray to thy Father, which is *in secret*; and thy Father, which seeth *in secret*, shall reward thee openly. Mat. xi. 6.—(k) *Praising*, and giving *Thanks* to the Lord, because He is good, for his *Mercy* endureth for ever. Ezra iii. 11.—(l) Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. Matt. xxii. 37.—(m) Thou shalt *fear* the Lord thy God. Deut. vi. 12. The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom. Prov. ix. 10.—(n) Thou shalt diligently hearken to the Voice of the Lord thy God, and do *that*, which is right in his Sight, and keep all his Statutes. Exod. xv. 26. Christ will be revealed from Heaven, to take Vengeance on them, who *obey not* the Gospel. 2 Thess. i. 8.—(o) Trust in the Lord with all thine Heart: In all thy Ways acknowledge Him. Prov. iii. 5.—(p) Thy will be done. Mat. vi. 10. In Patience possess ye your Souls. Luke xxi. 19.

2. (q) I live by the *Faith* of the Son of God. Gal. ii. 20.—Who came into the World to *save* Sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15.—This is Christ the *Saviour* of the World.

John

the great Mediator, (r) "*the King of Kings,*
" and Lord of Lords. Rev. xvii. 14. to
" whom all Power is given in Heaven, and
" in Earth." Mat. xxviii. 18. You are to
 reverence Him, as a divine Teacher; (s)—
 You are to love Him; (t)—trust in Him;
 (u)—and to rejoice in Him as your atoning Sa-
 crifice; (w)—to obey him; (x)—and to imi-
 tate his *Example*;—(y) "*The same Mind*
" should be in you, which was in Christ Jesus."

3. Duties

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John iv. 42.—(r) There is one God, and one Media-
 tor between God and Men. 1 Tim. ii. 5.—(s) We
 know, that thou art a Teacher sent from God. John
 iii. 2.—God sent his Son to bless us. Acts iii. 26.—
 (t) The Love of Christ constraineth us, 2 Cor. v. 14
 —(u) Bless'd are all they, that put their *Trust* in Him.
 Ps. ii. 12.—(w) We joy in God through our Lord Jesus
 Christ, by whom we have now received the *Atonement*.
 Rom. v. 11.—(x) He is the Author of eternal Sal-
 vation to all them that obey Him. Heb. v. 9.—(y)
 He left us an *Example* that we should follow his Steps.
 1 Pet. ii. 21. This *Example* of Christ should be imi-
 tated, especially in the following Particulars: His
 early Piety, Luke ii. 46. His Obedience to his *Pa-*
rents, Luke ii. 51.—His unwearied *Zeal* to do Good.
 Acts x. 38.—His Humility and Lowliness of Mind.
 Mat. xi. 29.—His Contentment in a low Condition.
 Luke ix. 78. and his eminent Self-Denial.—He sub-
 mitted to the mean Occupation of a Carpenter, to pro-
 vide for Himself, and the Family, to which He was
 related, Mark vi. 3.—His frequent and serious Per-
 formance of the Duty of private Prayer. Mark i. 35.
 Luke vi. 12. and of Thanksgiving. Mat. xi. 25. John
 xi. 41.—His Patience under Sufferings and Reproaches,
 1 Pet. ii. 23. and his Readiness to forgive Injuries.
 Luke xxiii. 34.—His Laying to Heart the *Sins*, as
 well as the *Sufferings of others*. Mark iii. 5.—His
 Zeal

3. *Duties to Men.*—You are to speak Truth always; (a)—to be diligent in your proper Business; (b)—doing Justice; (c)—and shewing Mercy; (d)—to be honest, (e)—friendly, and kind to all; (f)—You are to obey your Rulers; (g)—Parents; (h)—Masters, (i)—and other Superiors, in all their lawful Commands.

4. *Duties to your Families.*—You are to provide, and lay up for your Families; (k)—
to

T E X T S.

Zeal for the *public Worship* of God, and Attendance on it. John ii. 17.—His cheerful Submission to his heavenly Father's Will. Mat. xxvi. 39. His Love and Practice of Holiness, and Obedience both in Heart, and Life. Luke iv. 34.

3 (a) Putting away *Lying*, speak every Man Truth with his Neighbour. Ephes. iv. 24.—(b) Let him labour, working with his own Hands. 1 Cor. iv. 12.—Working with his Hands the Thing that is good. Ephes. iv. 28. Six Days shall ye labour. Exod. xx. 9.—(c) Render to all their Due. Rom. xiii. 7.—(d) Shew Mercy with Cheerfulness. Rom. xii. 8.—(e) Ye should do that, which is honest. 2 Cor. xiii. 7.—(f) Be kind one to another, tender-hearted. Ephes. iv. 32.—(g) Honour the King. 1 Pet. ii. 17. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves. Heb. xiii. 17.—(h) Honour thy Father and thy Mother. Exod. xx. 12. Ye shall fear every Man his Mother, and his Father. Lev. xix. 3. My Son, hear the Instruction of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy Mother. Prov. i. 8. Solomon rose up to meet his Mother, and bowed himself unto her, and set her on his right Hand. 1 Kings ii. 19. Jesus was subject to his Parents. Luke ii. 51.—(i) Servants obey in all Things your Masters. Ephes. vi. 5.

4. (k) If any provide not for his own, and especially for his own House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse

to take Care of your Childrens *Bodies*, to render them healthful, and breed them up so, as to support themselves—and have a Regard to their *Souls*; (*l*)—to pray *for* them and *with* them daily; (*m*)—and to have them taught to read and pray, and to be catechized, and instructed in religious Principles. (*n*)—You are moreover to *reprove* every Thing sinful and unbecoming in them (*o*).

5. *Duties to yourselves*.—Set a constant Guard on your Passions; especially Anger: (*p*)—And avoid all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh. (*q*)—Be sober, (*r*)—chaste, (*s*)—and diligent; (*t*)—
Bridle

T E X T S.

worse than an Infidel. 1 Tim. v. 8.—(*l*) Bring them up in the Nurture, and Admonition of the Lord. Ephes. vi. 4.—(*m*) David prayed, O Lord, give unto Solomon, my Son, a perfect Heart to keep thy Commandments. 1 Chron. xxix. 19. In every Thing by Prayer and Supplications, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God. Phil. iv. 6.—(*n*) These Things shall be in thine Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children. Deut. vi. 6, 7.—(*o*) Chasten thy Son while there is *Hope*; but, (as *some* translate it) be not transported (or in a Passion) to cause him to die. Prov. xix. 18. *But correct Him with Moderation, Justice, and Tenderneſs*. Ye Fathers provoke not [by improper Corrections] your Children to Wrath, Ephes. vi. 4.

5. (*p*) He that is slow to Anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his *Spirit*, than he that ruleth a City. Prov. xvi. 32.—(*q*) Abstain from fleshly Lusts, which *war* against the Soul. 1 Pet. ii. 11.—(*r*) Let us watch and be sober. 1 Theſſ. v. 6.—(*s*) Be discreet, chaste. Titus ii. 5. Whore and ongers not Adulterers God will judge. Heb. xiii. 4.—(*t*) The
B 5 Hand

Bridle your Tongues, (*u*)—and strive to grow wiser, and better every Day. (*w*)

6. *You are to be baptized.*—This is to be done (if it has not been already done) with Water, *in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost* (*x*)—This is to signify that you give up yourself to God, as his Servant;—that you acknowledge Christ, as your Saviour and Lord;—and that Baptism is a Sign (or Representation) of *that* Purity of Heart as well as of Life, which you must endeavour to obtain by the Help of the *Holy Spirit*.—In *these* Views often think of your Baptism, and endeavour to improve it.

7. *You are to receive the Lord's Supper*—at which *Bread* and *Wine* are to be eaten and drank in Christian Churches, by all the faithful Followers of Christ, to the
End

T E X T S.

Hand of the *diligent* maketh rich. Prov. x. 4. The Soul of the *Sluggard* desireth, and hath Nothing, but the Soul of the *diligent* shall be made fat. Prov. xii. 4. Be *diligent*, that ye may be found of Him in Peace, 2 Pet. iii. 14.—(*u*) If any Man among you seem to be *religious*, and *bridleth* not his Tongue, but *deceiveth* his own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain. James i. 26.—(*w*) Let us go on unto Perfection. Heb. xi. 1. Grow in Grace 2 Pet. iii. 18.

6. (*x*) Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Mat. xxviii. 19.

End of the World. (y)—This is to be done in Remembrance of *Him*, who died as a Sacrifice to obtain *Pardon* of Sin, the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, and eternal Life for all true Penitents. By this Ordinance they *may* cheerfully hope to attain *greater Measures* of divine Assistance, and Comfort; and by *this* their Faith may be strengthened in Christ's second Coming. It is likewise an Engagement to serve, and obey Him; and to love their Fellow-christians.

N. B. *To neglect any of the above-mentioned Duties to God, Christ, Men, your Family, or Self, is sinful; and God will punish you for it.*

* * * This is the *Sum* and *Substance* of the Christian Religion.—*Fuller* Instruction ought to be learned from Time to Time, as the Capacity of the Learner will permit; and as he has Opportunities for it; especially by a careful and serious Attendance on *public Worship*.

In

T E X T S.

7. (y) As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death, 'till He come.
1 Cor. xi. 26.

In Order to your further Instruction, the following *Directions* and *Helps* are added.

Directions for the Poor.—Trust in God; (a)—Be industrious, and frugal; (b)—Be patient and content; (c)—Be watchful against Temptations to Envy, to Murmuring, (d) and to Stealing; (e)—Be of an obliging Temper, and be grateful; (f)—Take Care to get spiritual and eternal Riches. (g)

2. *Directions for the Sick.*—Settle worldly Affairs. (b)—Send for a Minister. (i)—Be reconciled if you have a Quarrel with any. (k)
—Exa-

T E X T S.

1. (a) The Poor committeth himself unto Thee: Thou art the Helper of the fatherless. Ps. x. 14.—(b) Much Food is in the Tillage of the Poor. Prov. xiii. 23. And she went and came, and gleaned in the Field of Boaz, Ruth ii. 3.—(c) The Lord maketh poor, 1 Sam. ii. 7. In whatever State thou art, therewith be content. Phil. iv. 11.—(d) Fret not thyself, nor be envious. Ps. xxxvii. 1.—(e) Lest I be poor and steal. Prov. xxx. 9.—(f) Naomi said, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his Kindness. Ruth ii. 20.—(g) The Poor shall be rich in Faith, and Heirs of the promised Kingdom. James ii. 5.

2. (b) Set thine House in Order. Isai. xxxviii. 1.—(i) The Prophet came to sick Hezekiah: He prayed and wept. Isai. xxxviii. 1, 2, 3.—(k) Father, forgive them. Luke xxiii. 34.—Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a Quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do

—Examine Conscience and Life. (*l*)—Pray to God and confess Sin. (*m*)—Exercise Repentance and Faith in Christ; (*m*)—and also Christian Patience. (*n*)

HELPS for practising your Duty.

1. Begin and end every Day with humble and earnest Prayer to God through the Intercession of Christ; and examine your Heart and Life every Evening, particularly by the Prayers you presented to God in the Morning; that you may see whether you have endeavoured to act agreeably to the Petitions you then made.

2. Learn a few Texts of Scripture by Heart every Sunday, (especially *that* or those, which you hear *preached on at Church*,)—and, during the Week, *think* on them, and pay a due Regard to them in your Conduct.

3. Avoid as much as you can, *bad Company*, and all *Temptations* to Sin. [§]—If you are fond of strong *Liquor*, don't go near an Ale-house, lest you should be tempted to go into it. If you are given to *loose Women*,

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do ye Col. iii. 13.—(*l*) Let us search and try our Ways.
Lam. iii. 40.—(*m*) Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Confess your Faults one to another. James v. 13. 16.—(*m*) My Soul is humbled in me. Lam. iii. 20. I know in whom I have believed, 2 Tim. i. 12.
—(*n*) Be patient, James v. 7.

Women, take Care not to go near the Place where you are likely to see any such.]—Be constantly in the Way of your *Business* and *Duty*, which is the Way of *Safety*; and remember that excellent Rule of our *Lord*, “to do unto *others*, as you would they should do unto *you*.” Mat. vii. 12.

4. Diligently attend public Worship, Morning and Evening, every Sunday. Get what Instruction you can in *private*. Be serious in your Behaviour. Stay *yourself*, and keep your *Family* (if you have any) at Home after the public Worship of the Day is ended;—Talk to your Family of what you have been hearing at Church. Let the *Bible*, or some plain *practically religious* Book, be read. Wander not about the Fields, setting a bad Example of Irreligion, nor make Visits to your Neighbours, to hinder *them*, and *yourself* from catechizing Children, or improving themselves, or Family in the Scriptures, and *in growing in Grace and the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

5. Think *often* and *seriously*, that God’s Eye is always upon you; and that you are continually hastening to Death and Judgment, to Heaven, or Hell.

6. Endeavour to the utmost of your Power to *do your Duty*; but always depend on *God* for the Assistance of his *Spirit*, and for Acceptance through his *Son*.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS and TEXTS proper to be applied to particular Persons according to their *Temper* and *Character*.

I. Thoughts and Texts proper for *wilful* and *habitual Sinners*.

Consider the Number, Greatness, and Aggravation of your Sins;—how long practised;—what Mischief they have done. (a)—Consider moreover against what *Advantages* you have sinned. (b)—Think on the awful Threatenings in Scripture; (c)—especially on the Doom of the wicked. (d)—Pray for Mercy, and Grace. *God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

T E X T S.

I. (a) They consider not in their Hearts, that I remember all their Wickedness: Now their own Doings have beset them about, they are before my Face. Hof. vii. 2.—(b) That Servant, which *knew* his Lord's Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes. Luke xii. 47.—(c) We must all appear before the *Judgment-Seat* of Christ, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good, or bad. 2 Cor. v. 10. Behold I come quickly, saith the Lord, to give every Man, according as his Work shall be. Rev. xxii. 12.—(d) The wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment. Matt. xxv. 46. He, who being often reprov'd, hardeneth his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without Remedy. Prov. xxix. 1.

II. Repent

Sinner, Luke xviii. 13. "Create in me a clean Heart, O God." Ps. li. 10. Examine what *Effect* your Prayers have had on you.

II. For the careless, inconsiderate, and thoughtless.

Pause, and think ; especially on Death and Eternity. "Consider your Ways." Hag. i. 5. "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the Will of the Lord is." Ephes. v. 17. "Know thou that God will bring thee into Judgment." Eccles. xi. 9. "Be not as the Horse and Mule without Understanding." Ps. xxxii. 9.—Pray for divine teaching and Help. "Teach me thy way, O Lord." Ps. lxxxvi. 11. "That which I see not, teach thou me." Job xxxiv. 32.—Else you will grow worse and perish for ever.—"Jerusalem remembered (or considered) not her last End, therefore she came down wonderfully ; she had no Comforter." Lam. i. 9.

III. For an awakened convinced Sinner.

Be thankful that there is Room for Hope. "Jesus Christ came to save the chief of Sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15.—Think on the Promises to Repentance, Confession, and Humiliation ; (e)—and the Instances of their Acceptance

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II. (e) Repent, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out. Acts iii. 19. Him, that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. John vi. 37. If we confess our Sins, God is faithful, and just to forgive

Acceptance and Efficacy: Such as the Conversion of the Persecutor St. Paul; [See the *ninth* Chapter of Acts]—of the Jailor at Philippi; [See Acts xvi. 25 to 35.]—and of the once *profligate*, but afterwards *holy* Corinthians: [See 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.]—Break off all your Sins, and practise the Duties which you have neglected: especially *secret Prayer*. “*Cease to do Evil: Learn to do well.*” Isai. i. 16, 17. But make no Delay. “*Oh! that thou hadst known in this thy Day the Things which belong to thy Peace.*” Luke xix. 42. “*To-day, if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.*” Heb. iii. 7.

IV. *For the formal and confident, [or self-righteous.]*

“*Certain Men trusted, that they were righteous, and despised others.*” The Pharisee said, “*God, I thank thee, I am not as other Men.*” Yet he was an *Hypocrite*. Luke xviii. 9, 11. “*Shew my People their Sins; tho’ they seek me daily, as if they did Righteousness.*” Isa. lviii. 2, 3.—“*Having the Form of Godliness without the Power of it.*” 2 Tim. iii. 5. “*Who can say he has made his Heart clean?*” Prov. xx. 9. “*If we say we have no Sin we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.*” 1 John i. 8.—Many will say to Christ at the Day of Judgment, “*Have*

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forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from *all* Unrighteousness. 1 John i. 9.

we not prophesied in thy Name?" Mat. vii. 22. to whom he will reply, "*I never knew you: Depart from me. Ye are they, who justify yourselves before Men.*" Luke xvi. 15.

V. *For the Backsliders, those, who have left off Prayer, public Worship, and other Means of Grace.*

"Better not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after having known it to turn from it." 2 Pet. ii. 21.—"*Let us search, and try our Ways, and turn again unto the Lord.*" Lam. iii. 40.—"*Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first Works.*" Rev. ii. 5. Otherwise your Case will be dreadful. "*The Backslider in Heart shall be filled with his own Ways.*" Prov. xiv. 14.—Beware of Backsliding for the future: *God will speak Peace, but let us not turn again to folly.*" Ps. lxxv. 8.—"*Take with you Words, and turn to the Lord. He will heal your Backsliding.*" Hos. xiv. 2, 4.

VI. *For the sincere, consistent, and exemplary Christian.*

Be thankful to divine Grace. Remember what that great, but humble Apostle St. Paul says of himself: "*By the Grace of God I am what I am.*" 1 Cor. xv. 10.—The same Apostle, (that no one may be puffed up with Pride) asks this Question, "*Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Why then dost thou glory?"* 1 Cor. iv. 7.—

Hold

Hold fast your Integrity; (f)—and guard against Declensions; especially in secret Prayer. Depend on God, and often say, "*Hold thou me up, O Lord, and I shall be safe.*" Ps. cxix. 117. "*Praying always.*" Eph. vi. 18. Guard against Sins, little Sins—against Neglect of Duty, or Trifling in it. "*Stand in Awe and sin not.*" Ps. iv. 4. "*Abstain from all Appearance of Evil.*" 1 Thess. v. 22. Endeavour to instruct, convert, and edify others, "*Strengthen thy Brethren.*" Luke xxii. 32. "*Live by the faith of Christ.*" Gal. ii. 20.

VII. *For true Christians, oppressed with Doubts, or Fears.*

Examine from whence they arise. "*Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?*" Ps. xlii. 11. Believe the Mercy, and Promises of God. (g)—Christ commanded, that "*Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins* should be preached in his Name among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke xxiv. 47. as they were the greatest Sinners, and most wanted the Offers of

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VI. (f) "*Till I die, I will not remove my Integrity from me.*" Job xxvii. 5. "*Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.*" Job xiii. 15.

VII. (g) Thus saith the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth Eternity, I dwell with him who is of a
contrite

of Pardon on their Repentance. Our Lord has likewise declared, "*Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.*" John vi. 37. "*The Blood of Christ cleanseth real Penitents from all Sin.*" 1 John i. 7.—It is the Case of many *true* Christians to have *Doubts* and *Fears*: (b)—*Wait on God for Comfort*: (i)—But *wait on Him in the Way of Duty*, and with *Perseverance*.

VIII. *For such as are under Melancholy, Dejection of Mind, or Despair.*

You are to examine the *true Cause* of this.—Is it from any grievous Sin *formerly* committed? or from any Anxiety about your *present State*; or only an imaginary Danger? You may not *at present* be a proper Judge in your own Case. Do not *impute* to the Agency of Satan what may be owing to the Disorder

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Contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the *humble*, and to revive the Heart of the *contrite* ones. Isai. lvii. 15 —(b) The Psalmist had his *Doubts and Fears*, when he thus expostulates with himself, "Is the Lord's *Mercy* clean gone for ever? Doth his *Promise* fail for evermore? Hath God *forgotten* to be gracious? Hath he in *Anger shut up* his tender *Mercies*?—Then, said he, this is my *Infirmity*: But I will remember the Years of the Right Hand of the Most High." Ps. lxxvii. 8, 9, 10.—(i) *Wait on the Lord*: Be of good Courage; and He shall strengthen thine Heart: Wait, I say, on the Lord. Ps. xxvii. 14. "Acquaint thyself with God, and be at Peace." Job xxii. 21. Blessed are they that *mourn*, for they shall be *comforted*. Mat. v. 4.

VIII. He

der of your *Body*, or Weakness of your *Mind*. Consult some faithful Minister, or Christian Friend. Put your Trust in *God*. (*k*) —Take Comfort likewise in the Riches of his Mercy; (*l*)—in the Merits of Christ's Blood (*m*)—in the Promise to Penitents; [See Acts iii. 19.] and in the Instances of the *greatest* Sinners, as King Manasseh, [See 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.] St. Paul, and many others recorded in Scripture, who have obtained Mercy.—Above all, never leave off *Christian Ordinances*, as publick Worship; especially omit not *secret Prayer*. James v. 13. Plead this Promise with God, “*Call upon me in the Day of Trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*” Ps. l. 15.—You may be as blameable in thinking *too ill* of yourself, as in thinking *too well*.—You should for the Honour of God, the Credit of Religion, and your own Comfort, strive against this *groundless* Despair. Remember that
God's

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VIII. (*k*) He will not be afraid of any evil Tidings, for his Heart *standeth fast, and believeth* in the Lord : Or (as it is in the Bible Translation of the Psalms) his Heart *is fixed, trusting* in the Lord. Ps. cxii. 7.—(*l*) That in the Ages to come He might shew the exceeding *Riches of his Grace* in his Kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Ephes. ii. 7. —(*m*) If we walk in the Light, as God is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from *all Sin*. 1 John i. 7.

God's Regard to you does not *change* with the Frame of your Mind at any particular Time; if the general and prevailing Disposition of it be *right*. Meditate frequently on the Compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ, "A bruised Reed shall be not break; and smoking Flax shall be not quench. Mat. xii. 20. He came to preach good Tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted." Isa. lxi. i. Remember likewise for your Comfort this general Declaration of St. Peter, "The Lord is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance." 2 Pet. iii. 9.

N. B. It may be said, that there are only a few THOUGHTS and TEXTS, mentioned to be apply'd to *each* of these Characters: But the Nature and Compass of this little Tract would not admit of *more*; nor would it have been consistent with such a Design, as *this*, to have added *more*; which was merely to suggest some *leading* Thoughts to *poor* and *ignorant* Persons; by which they might benefit themselves, their Families, and Neighbours in the *lower* Rank of Life.—Farther Instruction, according to their Capacity and Inclination, may be obtained by *other* Means.

A Man may as well live *without Breath* as a Christian *without Prayer*. This is the *Foundation Duty*, and all *other Duties* in a great Measure *depend* on it. That you may

may not therefore be without *Assistance* in so essential a Point, learn some *short* Prayer, properly suited to your Station. Such an one is here composed for you : Or you may use one of the Collects out of the Common Prayer Book, as the Collect for the second Sunday after Easter, or the first, seventh, twelfth, or eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, or that for Ash-Wednesday (or such others as may best suit your Disposition, or the Necessities of your Case) adding to *either* of these Collects what relates to the Morning or Evening, as inserted between Hooks [thus] in the following *short* Prayer. Add likewise the Lord's Prayer, and St. Paul's Benediction ; with which our Church Service concludes.

Let some Christian Friend teach these Prayers to those, who cannot read them. Or they may *pray* to God in their own Words, (for God regardeth the *Heart*, and not merely the outward Expression of its Sentiments) that, thro' Jesus Christ the Mediator, He would pardon their Sins ; that He would help them by his *Grace* to love, and serve Him faithfully for the Time to come ; and that he would bestow on them all necessary Blessings for this World, and bring them safe at last to his heavenly Kingdom.

A short PRAYER to be learned by Heart, and used daily in the Morning, at Noon, or in the Evening.

O Lord God, thou knowest my Heart, and seest all my Ways; and thou art *able*, and *willing* to supply all my Wants. Thou hast been *kind*, and *good* to me all my Days; especially in giving me many *religious* Advantages. But I have lived too forgetful of *Thee*, and disobedient to thy *Commands*. Graciously forgive all my *Sins*, thro' thy Son Jesus Christ; and enlighten, purify, and quicken my Heart. Make me to mind *Religion*, as my *great Business* in Life; and to attend to the Care of my *Soul*, as "*the One Thing needful*." Grant me Health of *Body*, and Peace of *Mind*. Bless my honest Labours; and "*Feed me with Food convenient for me*." Help me to "*abstain from all Appearance of Evil*;" to be just and friendly to every one; especially *enable* me to fear, love, and obey *thee*; to be *diligent* in my *proper Business*, and *useful* in my Station.

Add in the Morning.

[I thank thee, that I am brought to see *another Day*. Lord, guard me, and provide for me through it: Especially keep a *Sense* of thine *all-seeing Eye* continually upon my Heart.]

Add

Add in the Evening.

[I bleſs thee for the Health, and Comfort of the *paſt* Day, and commit myſelf to thy Care through the *following* Night. Deſend me from *all* Evil; and may I ſee the Light of the Morning *in Peace*!]

Prepare me for Affliction, Changes and Death; and at Length of thy *Mercy* receive me to thy heavenly Kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

N. B. Obſerve that in the Lord's Prayer the three firſt Petitions relate to God; and the Subſtance of them is, that He may be glorified.—The three laſt Petitions relate to Ourſelves; and the Subſtance of them is, that our Wants (both temporal and ſpiritual) may be ſupplied.

The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.—Give us *this* Day our daily Bread; And forgive us our Treaſpaſſes, as we forgive *them*, that treſpaſs againſt us: And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil:—For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Benediction of St. PAUL.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with *me* (and with *all*, whom it is my Duty to remember in my Prayers) this Day, [*or this Night*] and evermore. *Amen.*

At the Conclusion of your Devotions it can never be improper to add these important Words of the Apostle; [2 Cor. xiii. 14.] which contain a Summary of all the inestimable Blessings, which you have been imploring, and of all, which constitute the Happiness of a Christian.

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